

Broome County Health Department

September 2014

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Message from the Director

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Broome County Health Department's newsletter! Our goal is to share new programs, policies, and emerging issues in public health with you. If you have any ideas or suggestions for future stories, please email sbritton@co.broome.ny.us for consideration. I hope you enjoy our publication!

Claudia A. Edwards, MS

Chikungunya Causes Traveler Concerns

The Broome County Health Department is raising awareness about Chikungunya, a mosquito-borne viral disease characterized by fever and joint-pain. Outbreaks of the disease have typically occurred African, Asian, and European countries. The most recent outbreak of the disease has 197 cases reported from Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



Aedes mosquitoes transmit Chikungunya virus to people.

The transmission of the disease within the Caribbean causes concern for travelers who have visited the area on summer holiday. As of August 12, there have been 96 cases of travel acquired Chikungunya among residents of New York State. There have been no locally transmitted cases within the United States, with the exception of four cases in Florida.

The disease is spread primarily by two species of daytime biting mosquitos, the *Aedes aegypti* and the *Aedes albopictus*. Neither of these species is typically found in Broome County.

Bites from mosquitos within Broome County can be reduced by wearing long sleeve pants and sleeves. Local mosquitos bite more frequently during dusk and dawn.

There is currently no vaccine for the disease and the best method of prevention is to avoid mosquito bites while traveling to affected areas.

Symptoms of Chikungunya usually appear 3 to 7 days following infection by mosquito. Symptoms include a sudden onset of a fever and joint pain. The joint pain is typically located in both sides of the body and often in the hands and feet.

Any individual concerned they may have acquired Chikungunya while traveling to Florida or the Caribbean is encouraged to contact their primary care provider. For more information call 778-2804.

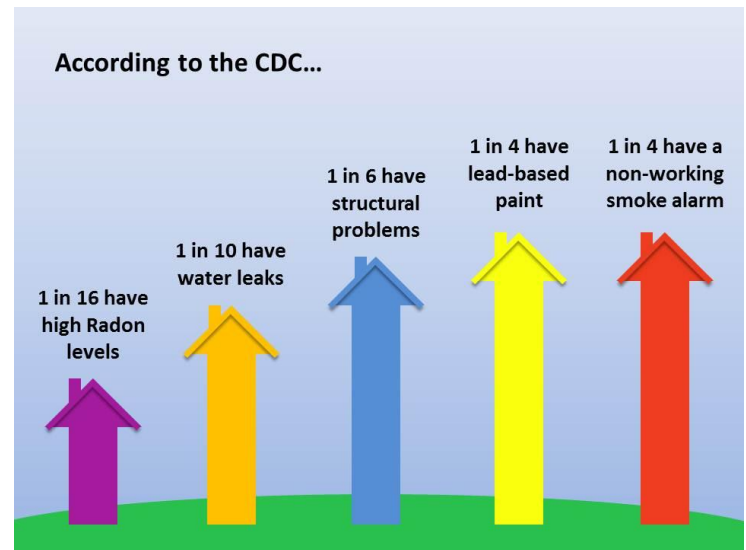
Reality Check to Smoke out Tobacco

The Broome County Health Department has been awarded the Reality Check grant for the next five years. The Reality Check program is an addition to Broome County's long standing Tobacco Control Program. The two grants together are worth \$325,000 per year.

The goals of the Tobacco Control Program are to reduce rates of smoking within Broome and Tioga Counties. This is accomplished through public education, community mobilization, educating policy-makers, and providing technical support and assistance to agencies and municipalities who have implemented tobacco control policies. The program has helped municipalities establish tobacco free outdoor policies, which include parks and recreation areas.

Reality Check is a youth-led movement against tobacco companies, which works to counteract marketing created by tobacco companies. Under adult guidance, adolescents take action to mitigate, reduce, or eliminate deceptive marketing about tobacco. For more information call 778-3930.

Healthy Neighborhoods Program Launches



The Broome County Health Department has been awarded a highly competitive New York State grant called the Healthy Neighborhoods Program. This grant will bring \$1.2 million to Broome County over the next 5 years. It will be used to address health and housing issues in two targeted areas in within Binghamton and Johnson City.

This grant is designed to reduce environmental triggers for asthma, residential injuries (falls, fires) and childhood lead poisoning. The program will also work to improve indoor air quality by addressing smoking, carbon monoxide, radon, and mold. Participants will receive education and hands on demonstrations as well as some supplies to help

them make their homes healthier. Supplies may include smoke detectors, CO detectors, fire extinguishers, cleaning supplies, child safety items, pest control items, and mattress covers.

Please call the Broome County Health Department at 778-2847 for additional information or to make a referral.

September is National Preparedness Month

September marks National Preparedness Month and the Broome County Health Department Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Program asks you to take some time to ensure you and your loved ones are prepared for emergencies and disasters.

“Emergency planning begins on the individual and family level,” says Dr. Christopher Ryan, Health Department Medical Director. “The more prepared the community is going into a disaster, the better the overall outcome will be following the disaster,” Ryan added.

Recommendations for emergency preparedness kits include having a three day supply of drinkable water, typically a gallon per person per day, non-perishable food, a flashlight, extra batteries, a first aid kit, a seven day supply of prescribed and over the counter medications, personal hygiene items, extra cash, emergency blankets, and hand tools. Its also important to remember to plan for household pets by having food and water for them.

In addition to preparing a kit, individuals and families are encouraged to make a plan for an emergency. A plan should include a

meeting location if electricity or phone service becomes unavailable.

More information on emergency family planning can be found at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/plan/> or by contacting the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Program at 778-3944.

School Vaccination Changes

Certain vaccination requirements have recently changed for students in New York State to be consistent with recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on

Immunization Practices (ACIP), a group of medical and public health experts that develop recommendations on how to use vaccines to control diseases in the United States.

Students entering kindergarten or 6th grade in the 2014-2015 school year will now be required to have two doses of the varicella (chicken pox) vaccine and 3-4 doses of poliomyelitis vaccine. All other students will be able to attend school this year with one dose of varicella, and 3 doses of poliomyelitis. This new requirement will apply to all 2014-2015 incoming kindergarten and 6th grades students, along with the subsequent grade levels that the 2014-2015 kindergarten and 6th grade students move up to.

For more information contact the Division of Clinic Services at 778-2839.



Emergency Kit Items

- Drinkable water
- Non-perishable food
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- First aid kit
- Cash
- Blankets
- Hand tools



- **Students in grades pre-K or K through 6 will be required to have age-appropriate doses of DPT or DTaP, in accordance with the ACIP schedule.**
- **Two doses of MMR are no longer required for entrance into kindergarten, though students must have two doses by age 7.**
- **Children following alternative vaccination schedules who are not up to date with ACIP requirements may be excluded from school attendance until they have met the requirements.**

Falls Prevention Awareness Day

Mark your calendars for the 7th annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day, which will be observed on September 23, 2014. This year's theme, Strong Today, Falls Free® Tomorrow, seeks to raise awareness about how to prevent fall-related injuries among older adults.

The Health Department's Better Balance for Broome will be holding an educational event at the Oakdale Mall Center Court on Tuesday, September 23, 2014 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. For more information call 765-4180.

Children with Special Health Care Needs Program Presentation

The Children with Special Health Care Needs Program will be holding a workshop for families and providers with children with special needs. The program applies to individuals with special needs aged 21 years and younger. Presentations will include encouraging language development, movement, and stretching.

The workshop will be held at the Decker Room of the Broome County Library on September 16th, 2014 from 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm. For more information call 778-3930.